QUEERING TUPAC AMARU II

Travestismo as Methodology and the Re-imagination of Andean Cosmology

Danielle M. Roper

In 2009, the Peruvian artist Javier Vargas Sotomayor (Javi Nefando) mounted the controversial exhibition *La Falsificatión de las Túpac* (*The Falsification of Tupac*) at the art gallery La Alianza Francesa in Lima, Peru. The art show combined drag performance, portraiture, and digital prints and portrayed José Gabriel Condorcanqui Tupac Amaru II as a *maricón* (fag), as a cisgender woman, and as a *travesti* (transvestite).[1] Tupac Amaru II is a national hero who led the largest Andean insurrection against Spanish colonial rule in 1780. He is a revered symbol of indigenous resistance, the father of Peruvian independence, a martyr, and hero of the nation. Vargas's *travestismo* (transvestism) of Tupac Amaru so effectively challenged his stature as an iconic symbol of masculine heroism and emblem of national identity that the gallery partially censored the exhibition. The censorship prompts a series of immediate questions: Who *is* Tupac Amaru? Why was this exhibition so controversial? This essay, however, examines Vargas's queering of a national hero to discern how travestismo functions as a methodology and epistemology for working on and against the symbols that underwrite national identity.[2] That Vargas named his provocation an act of falsification is important because the travesti is frequently dismissed as "the false woman." In this essay, I treat falsification as a central precept of a travesti methodology by paying close attention to the role of fiction, falsity, and fabrication in the production of the hero and the nation. I argue that travestismo not only exposes the constructedness of its original but also functions as a tool of dissent and as a space for staging an encounter with the possible.

Vargas's deployment of travestismo interests me because queerness in the Andes and travestismo are sites and traditions of sexual dissidence in Latin America that operate on the margins of US-based queer studies. While this essay critically interrogates how a nation produces a national hero, the first section attends to

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the place of travestismo in Peru's sexual underground and Andean queer studies in the field. The second section assesses the role of falsification in the construction of Tupac Amaru as aspirational figure of the nation and as emblem of the good patriot by engaging Tupac Amaru's iconography during processes of canonization in the 1960s and 1970s. I conclude this essay with an analysis of the deployment of travestismo as a site of reimagination by focusing on Vargas's engagement with Andean cosmology. Ultimately, I suggest that his falsification gestures to multiple horizons of possibility, for the reworking of Tupac Amaru's gender reimagines the nation, masculinity, political ideology, decolonial and queer liberation, and history.

The Four "False Women"

Javier Vargas Sotomayor—whose stage name, Javi Nefando, invokes the *pecado nefando* (nefarious sin) of sodomy from the colonial era—is an artist based in Lima, Peru. The scandal that ensued at the art gallery is just one of several instances across his artistic career where his queering of Tupac Amaru has been censored.[3] Vargas's falsified Tupacs are androgynous figures, pop stars, drag queens, and sacred virgins whose presence on murals, in art galleries, and in activist spaces has been the subject of fierce opposition and is almost immediately discarded or removed. In his work, Vargas typically appropriates some of the trademark features of images of Tupac Amaru to produce queer and feminized renditions of a hero. Figure 1 is a very common portrayal of Tupac Amaru. He is seen from the chest up against a red background. Tupac Amaru is wearing a large black hat, maroon jacket, and white shirt, and he has long, flowing black hair that falls below his shoulders, olive skin, and chiseled features: large pointy nose, white eyes, thick, black brows, and thin lips. Although this portrait is not the original to Vargas's queer copies, it exemplifies the typical portrayal of Tupac Amaru as the embodiment of a normative masculinity.[4] That Vargas targeted the portrait of Tupac Amaru prompts the question: what is the role of the image in the production of the national hero and his gender?

While the exhibition at the Alianza Francesa showcased multiple queer Tupacs, its central piece was a lithograph that portrayed the hero as four women icons: the American actress Marilyn Monroe, the famous Peruvian Huayno singer Dina Páucar, the Mexican artist Frida Kahlo, and the American actress Farrah Fawcett (fig. 2a–d). A critical reworking of the hero, the portrait transforms Tupac Amaru's face into that of a woman. Each is seen from the chest up wearing Tupac Amaru's trademark large black hat, jacket, and white shirt. The faces contrast against backgrounds replete with vibrant pops of color. While the colors of each background differ, they all show fading grey lines, fragmented drawings,

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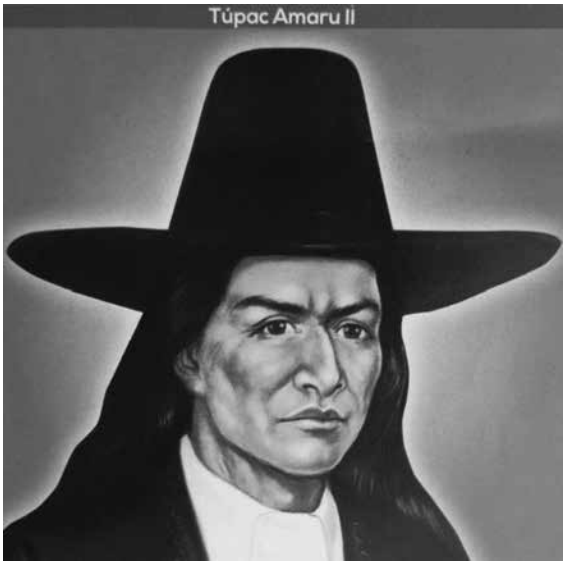

Figure 1. Portrait of José Condorcanqui Tupac Amaru II taken from a *lámina escolar* (illustration used in school materials). Title: "Mártires de la Independencia" ("Martyrs of Independence"). Produced by Navarrete Number 7. Source: Author collection.

and words that are almost imperceptible. Each Tupac is adorned with glamorous makeup and has perfectly styled hair. As Marilyn (fig. 2a), Tupac Amaru is shown smiling against a lime green background, with short blonde hair, green and black mascara, bright red lipstick, and a tiny red mole above her lips. As Farrah Fawcett (fig. 2b), Tupac Amaru appears against a pink background, with dark blonde hair falling at his shoulders, pink and silver mascara, pink lipstick, and a broad smile. In the lithograph, Tupac Amaru is in a state of constant transformation and reinvention.

In the two images that follow (figs. 2c and 2d), the smiles on the women's faces are all gone. Suddenly, Tupac Amaru is the Huayno singer Dina Páucar, with fiery red hair that flows down her back (fig. 2c). Her bangs are trimmed just above thin eyebrows, and she wears blue and black mascara and bright red lipstick. A long brown-and-black earring dangles from his earlobe, and unlike the other Tupacs, her black jacket is adorned with bright yellow and white flowers. In yet another, Tupac Amaru becomes Frida Kahlo (see fig. 2d). Shown against a dark-green background, Tupac Amaru appears with long black hair, white and green mascara, a thin black moustache, and bright red lipstick. Vargas uses serial repetition and the proliferation of images to present multiple renditions of the hero.

Without "*las Túpac*" in the exhibition's title, one could easily miss that the four women are in fact travestis—those pejoratively dismissed as "false women." For it is the title that grounds the reconstruction of the hero in the bodily act of making false, of destabilizing the presumed fixity of gender. The artist co-opted the portrait and its trademark symbols that have produced Tupac Amaru as a

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Figures 2a–d. *La Falsificación de las Túpac*, by Javi Vargas, 100 cm × 75 cm. Javi Vargas Digital Prints. Images reproduced with permission of the artist. (a) Marilyn, (b) Farrah, (c) Dina, (d) Frida.

quintessential male hero and reworked them by inserting cultural signs of femininity: lipstick, mascara, and so on. This is a queer(ed) Tupac Amaru masquerading as a Hollywood actress, a folk singer, a pop star. Also, the reference to Andy Warhol's Marilyn Monroe and other women icons riffs on the "pop achorado" style that emerged in Peru under the leftist military regime of Juan Velasco Alvarado from

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1968 to 1975. Invented by the artist Jesús Ruiz Durand, pop achorado combined cosmopolitan idioms of Pop Art associated with Andy Warhol, the visual styles of posters of the Cuban revolution, and indigenous imagery (Cant 2012, Buntinx 1996). Velasco Alvarado's regime spearheaded the canonization of Tupac Amaru, proclaiming him the father of its revolution and the poster boy of its signature land reform. They used Ruiz Durand's "pop achorado" aesthetic for its propaganda campaign. Vargas's appropriation of the "pop achorado" style and his deployment of feminine icons are salient because Tupac Amaru is rendered through local and international idioms of female iconicity and embedded within the cult of celebrity. He invites the viewer to read Tupac Amaru through the lens of female commodification and mass production, likening the creation of the national hero to the manufacture of the popular female icon.

Tupac Amaru, however, is not the only subject being queered in these portraits. For as Cornejo (2019: 458) writes, travestismo also entails "the refusal to signify only one thing and in only one way." The use of the Spanish feminine article "las" in the title of the exhibition—"The Falsification of *las* Tupac"—indexes that the women icons are also being falsified. Tupac Amaru is not simply shown as Marilyn, Frida, Dina, or Farrah; each of these female icons is also rendered as Tupac Amaru. His name is etched below the portrait of each of their faces. A queer hijacking of the male hero, the women icons seemingly usurp the place of the portrait's male protagonist. This is a double queering, where the portraits enact a feminine displacement of the male protagonist and concurrently frame these cisgender women as a male hero. To ask us to read Marilyn Monroe—an icon of ideal white femininity—as a male indigenous hero is to use a travesti methodology to reconfigure the signs and codes of femininity and masculinity. Through its reorganization of the signs, travestismo revels in the multiplicity of meaning. Just as travestis use fabrication, fiction, and disguise to destabilize and to reveal the constructedness of normative gender categories, so too does a travesti methodology use falsity and artifice to trouble official imaginations of national identity. Tupac Amaru and national identity, like the travesti, can always be remade and reimagined. Travestismo is not just a destabilizing force, it is a window into the possible.

The images also offer a critical reflection on the production of history. Behind each portrait is a faded drawing of the execution of Tupac Amaru II's proclaimed ancestor: the last Inca king, Tupac Amaru I. The image of the execution was taken from the indigenous chronicler Guaman Poma's seventeenth-century publication *El Primer Nueva Corónica y Buen Gobierno* (*The First New Chronicle and Good Government*)—the longest and most comprehensive critique of Spanish colonial rule to be written by an indigenous subject (Frye and Poma de Ayala

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2006). The execution of that last Inca king in 1572 marked the consolidation of the Spanish conquest. At the top of each lithograph, the word *INVISIBLE* is written in reverse, seeking to expose what was erased by the conquest. *The Falsification of Tupac* seeks to render visible what ought not to be seen. The superimposition of the women's faces over the scene of the execution links the travesti and the indigenous subject and underscores that queering Tupac Amaru attends to the racial, gendered, and sexual regimes of difference that organize the nation and the normal. At the end of this essay, I argue the use of the four women and the image serves to reimagine the Andean cosmovision. For now, I suggest that *Falsifying Tupac* exemplifies the ways travestismo serves as a prism for critically engaging the Inca past, official history, and discourses of raciality and sexuality as well as histories of violence and repression, which all organize national identity. Indeed, Peru's national identity depends on the exaltation of the indigenous subject as emblem of the nation, as sign of a glorified Inca past, and simultaneously as primitive, premodern figure in need of acculturation (de la Cadena 2000; Golash-Boza 2011). The multivalent nature of Vargas's intervention signals that Tupac Amaru marks the convergence of multiple aspects of national identity and their imbrication in discourses of masculinity, sexuality, and heroism.

Given the many instances of censorship of Vargas's work, I use this exhibition as a point of departure for deciphering the layers of signification that cohere in Tupac Amaru and his masculinity. In order to untangle public and state investment in them, I not only explain who Tupac Amaru is; I also seek to discern the work a national male hero has been made to do in the imagination of national identity. I focus on Velasco Alvarado's production of Tupac Amaru and his masculinity during the 1970s because several images from this period feature heavily in Vargas's personal archive and have served as originals to his queer renditions of Tupac Amaru. Vargas's oeuvre has frequently focused on the iconography of that period. The history I offer is hardly exhaustive, but in the section that follows, I offer a brief overview of Tupac Amaru's story as constructed by the Velasco Alvarado regime to explain who Tupac Amaru is and to explicate the stakes of Vargas's intervention.

Tupac Amaru II: The Rebel Hero

Every hero needs a good story. When Velasco Alvarado came to power in a coup in 1969, he proclaimed Tupac Amaru the father of his revolution. He spearheaded processes of canonization that branded Tupac Amaru as the perfect male hero. José Gabriel Condorcanqui Noguera, also known as Tupac Amaru II, was a *kuraka*

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(indigenous authority)[5] and one of the leaders of the largest Andean insurrection against Spanish colonial rule in the 1780s, known as the Tupac Amaru rebellion. The rebellion was largely a response to the Bourbon Reforms implemented by Spanish colonial rule, which increased taxation and labor demands on indigenous peoples (Thomson 2016: 407). Tupac Amaru emerged as the rebel hero in 1780 when he captured and oversaw the execution of the Spanish *corregidor* (magistrate) Antonio de Arriaga. At Arriaga's execution, Tupac Amaru announced his plan to abolish the sales tax and to expel Spanish authorities (Walker 2016: 2, 4). He and his partner Micaela Bastidas rallied insurgents across the Andes and torched mills, conquered haciendas, and killed Spanish authorities. The rebellion was the largest in the history of the Spanish-American empire, and it severely compromised colonial authority (Thomson 2016). As a major figurehead of the insurrection, Tupac Amaru fashioned himself as a warrior, slayer of colonial authorities, and defender of indigenous rights. During processes of canonization, Velasco Alvarado used this history to codify Tupac Amaru's masculinity as a sign of audacious bravery and violence in the service of a just cause.

Even though historians speculate that Tupac Amaru may have been mestizo, not indigenous, and affirm that the rebellion was in fact a multiracial coalition (Walker 2016; Thomson 2016), Tupac Amaru declared himself Inca royalty. He staked his political claims in ancestral heritage declaring he was the descendant of the last Inca king, Tupac Amaru I, ruler of Vilcabamba—the last stronghold of resistance against Spanish colonizers—and king of the four corners of the Inca empire (Tawantinsuyu). Tupac Amaru's proclaimed Inca heritage is significant because it imbued his leadership with mythological meaning. It cast him as a messianic figure whose insurrection signaled the return of the Inca and the reestablishment of a just world free of colonial exploitation. He positioned himself as a noble prince fighting for a lost empire and as the harbinger of an indigenous utopia. Tupac Amaru represented a noble masculinity and the ideals of liberation and justice. Velasco Alvarado capitalized on Tupac Amaru's image as a symbol of indigenous sovereignty to position his revolution in the 1960s as the fulfilment of a deferred liberation. Rejecting his predecessor's imagination of Peruvian identity as Hispanic, Velasco Alvarado sought to use Tupac Amaru to emphasize Peru's indigenous heritage, to cast the indigenous populace as heroes of his revolution, and to ultimately reimagine national identity (Roca-Rey 2016: 2). Despite ongoing debates about Tupac Amaru's racial identity, the regime cast him as a racialized masculinity who symbolized the ideals of racial uplift and the upending of an oppressive racial order. The story of the hero need not settle historical debates; rather, it must render the figure capacious and malleable enough to sustain col-

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lective fantasies, aspirations, and fictions that sustain particular imaginations of national identity and of gender.

Tupac Amaru's image has long been central to his symbolic meaning. While there are surprisingly few studies of Tupac Amaru in art history, the most famous image portrays him as a figure of exceptional military prowess. Following his victory over royalist troops in Sangarará, Tupac Amaru commissioned a famous portrait likening himself to the Spanish patron saint Santiago—a god associated with military power—also known as the Quechua god Illapa (god of thunder) (Cohen-Aponte 2021; Cahill 2006). In likening himself to Santiago, Tupac Amaru inscribed himself and his masculinity into visual regimes as a divine figure of extraordinary military power, a man with superhuman characteristics of godlike strength. Spanish colonizers immediately recognized the power of Tupac Amaru's image. Upon his execution, the colonial authority General José Areche implemented a set of policies to ensure the destruction of images of Tupac Amaru and those related to the Inca empire. Seeking to rid the Andes of any memory of him, of his rebellion, and of Inca rule, they outlawed the possession of any image of him and destroyed the Sangarará portrait (Walker 2016; Cahill 2006). As such, they targeted his image as a signifier that produced and proliferated his meaning beyond his death. The campaign was largely successful. Tupac Amaru became a marginal and obscure figure in Peruvian history until Velasco Alvarado's regime canonized him in the 1970s.

But neither the execution nor the repressive campaign undermined Tupac Amaru's symbolic power. In fact, Tupac Amaru's execution only added to his mysticism. His executioners sought to quarter him by tying each of his limbs to four horses. But when the horses pushed toward the corners of the plaza, his limbs did not separate from his torso. They were forced to behead him instead. In the 1960s, his death was mythologized in popular culture through the famous poem "Canto coral a Túpac Amaru que es la libertad" ("Choral Song to Tupac Amaru Who Is Liberty") by the Peruvian poet Alejandro Romualdo (1958). Each of the poem's nine stanzas outlines different attempts to kill Tupac Amaru and ends with the defiant refrain: "Y no podrán matarlo" (And they cannot kill him). One stanza reads:

Querrán volarlo y no podrán volarlo
Querrán romperlo y no podrán romperlo
Querrán matarlo y no podrán matarlo

They try to blow him up, and they cannot blow him up
They try to break him, and they cannot break him
They try to murder him, and they cannot kill him

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The stanzas' repetition of his resilience amid the various attempts to torture and murder him exemplifies the ways Tupac Amaru and his body are imagined as indestructible. The notion that Tupac Amaru could defy death added an air of invincibility to his masculinity. Velasco Alvarado's regime capitalized on this and codified Tupac Amaru's masculinity as a symbol of defiance, overcoming, and endurance. In summary, Tupac Amaru's masculinity is constituted by a set of signs across visual and discursive formations that signify an indestructible war hero, a mythical anticolonial rebel, a violent, all-powerful war hero, a messianic figure of godlike strength and military prowess, an Inca nobleman fighting for a lost empire, the harbinger of an indigenous utopia, and a defender and protector of indigenous rights. And these signs have rendered Tupac Amaru's masculinity and the figure of the male hero an overdetermined proxy for the nation, which in turn is codified as a masculine space that is indestructible, brave, and all-powerful and, simultaneously, as a domain that is subject to masculine power and control. Furthermore, Tupac Amaru exemplifies the function of national heroes for the creation of imagined communities in that heroes are effigies that uphold the fictions of a given imagined community and sustain the myth of national greatness.

Vargas's queering of Tupac Amaru's masculinity upends the mythos surrounding both Tupac Amaru and the nation, but it also has implications for the political project to which Tupac Amaru has been tethered. Indeed, the story of Tupac Amaru's fight against colonialism has also made him a celebrated figure of the Latin American and revolutionary Left. Velasco Alvarado's regime cast Tupac Amaru as the poster boy of some of the most progressive reforms in Peruvian history. Guerrilla groups in Uruguay and Peru took his name, and Black Panther Party member Afeni Shakur named her son—who became the rapper Tupac Shakur—after him. Varying leftist polities have cast Tupac Amaru as a metonym of liberation itself. Vargas is not only critiquing state imaginations of national identity; he is also queering the face of radical, decolonial possibility. While it may be tempting to dismiss Vargas's queering of Tupac Amaru as a wholesale rejection of the Left, the progressive reforms of Velasco Alvarado's regime, and Tupac Amaru's anticolonialist project, I insist that one can name the limitations of these varying visions of liberation without dismissing the value of their revolutionary projects. I read Vargas's critique as highlighting the exclusion of queer liberation from the platforms of the orthodox Left. More importantly, his interrogation of the Left, nationalism, and the production of history in his queering of Tupac Amaru ought to be situated within larger counterideological formations and traditions of sexual dissidence in the Andes.

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Queerness in the Andes and the Sexual Underground

Queerness in the Andes is understudied in the Euro-American academy. It poses a challenge to Western, European understandings of sex and gender and to heteropatriarchal structures of indigenous Andean societies. Scholars have sought to excavate the hitherto ignored hermeneutical and epistemological approaches to gender, sex, and sexuality in indigenous societies (Weismantel 2001; Horswell 2005) and to assess the role of performance art and submerged activism in challenging hegemonies of global capitalism, patriarchy, nationalism, and the inscription of heteronormativity in historiography in the region (López 2016; Gómez-Barris 2017; Roper 2019). Vargas shares company with noted queer artists Jaime Higa, Frau Diamanda, Germán Machuca, the late Giuseppe Campuzano, and many others who use the destabilization of gender categories in performance and visual art to trouble and expose the imbrication of heteronormativity in constructs of indigeneity, national identity, and official history. His falsified Tupacs even appeared in Campuzano's (2008) groundbreaking Museo Travesti del Perú (Transvestite Museum of Peru)—a queer museum that presented a national counterhistory of gender-bending and travestismo from the Inca period to the present (Roper 2019). That indigenous and travesti bodies are central protagonists in these artistic works index a queer-of-color critique that anchors queerness in processes of racial formation. Furthermore, these political projects fundamentally seek to upend hetero epistemologies as they pervade all facets of knowledge production in an indigenous Andean society, from hegemonic imaginations of the nation to counterideological formations.

Indeed, Vargas's work belongs to local genealogies of political and sexual dissidence in Peru that have at times operated in tension with the institutional Left and major figures of the art scene. Sexual dissidence in Peru is historically tied to the underground countercultural scenes known as *movida subterránea* (the *subte*, or underground, movement) that emerged in response to the political repression and terror of the dirty war in the 1980s. The movement occasioned the proliferation of anarchist creative production in poetry, rock, and queer artistic production. Queer art was lodged within larger artistic platforms that critiqued the violence, social crisis, and political repressions of the times (López 2013). The queer artistic collective Grupo Chaclacayo of that counterculture scene emerged as one of the most visible queer artistic collectives in Peruvian history. As notable predecessors to Vargas's work, they played a central role in crafting a political space wherein the critique of political repression is grounded in a steadfast rejection of normativity. The group targeted the venerated symbols of heteronormative nationalism in

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noted pieces, such as "Rosa Cordis" (1986), in which the member Sergio Zevallos famously queered Santa Rosa—the bride of Christ and the first beatified Saint of the Americas—and in another work, "Sangre y ceniza, variaciones sobre la Bandera" ("Blood and Ash: Variations on the Flag"), that used pornography to queer the national flag. As art historian Miguel López (2014: 26) explains, the group located the origins of political violence in structures of able-bodied heteronormativity that declare "war against any subject disobeying the hegemonic regimes of the 'normal' and against those bodies that are not useful for the productive demands of capitalism—the zero-positives, the disabled, the transgender, the migrants without papers, among others."

Grupo Chaclacayo's political visions posed a challenge to the gender and sexual politics of the orthodox Marxist Left. Indeed, esteemed figures of the art world dismissed their work on moral grounds, likening it to acts of terrorism, casting them as harbingers of moral decay and as too ideologically distant from Marxism (López 2013). Like his predecessors and contemporaries, Vargas's work specifically targets the idioms of hegemonic power that sustain the systemic regulation of bodies and of sexual difference. His deployment of travestismo forms part of queer political projects in Peru that eschew the politics of legislative recognition and state inclusion, reject calls for leftist unity, and instead seek to dismantle the grammars of normativity that organize daily life. I use Vargas's work as a point of departure for treating Andean queer studies not only as an imaginative space where freaks, dissidents, and sexual outcasts articulate projects of queer liberation that are decolonial and call for a decolonial liberation that refuses the strictures of heteropatriarchy but also as a site where they insist upon new idioms for conceptualizing liberatory possibilities.

Falsification is not only the modus operandi of Vargas's intervention; I argue it is also an allegory for interrogating the production of the national male hero. Velasco Alvarado's canonization of Tupac Amaru in the 1970s occasioned a quest to create an "archetypical image" of him and to construct him as a national ideal. All forms of travestismo point to the construction of the original, and Vargas's targeting of Tupac Amaru's image to rework his masculinity is salient because Tupac Amaru's image—as produced during the Velasco Alvarado regime—is not a singular, stable entity; its production depended on acts of falsification, fabrication, reappropriation, and reconstruction over time. I attend to the production of an archetypal image of Tupac Amaru during processes of canonization in the 1960s and 1970s to insist that the original to Vargas's queer copy is itself a construction that has relied on genealogies of falsification. In what follows, I assess the regime's canonization of

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Tupac Amaru and pay specific attention to the fictions and performative strategies the regime deployed to produce Tupac Amaru as a masculine ideal.

Reviving/Falsifying Tupac Amaru, the Archetypal Male Hero: How to Invent an Ideal

When Velasco Alvarado came to power, Tupac Amaru was still a relatively marginal figure in Peruvian history, and so the regime had to resurrect him and his image to fit the needs of the revolution. From the very outset, the regime produced a set of fictions to discursively tether Tupac Amaru to the revolution, mining his function as a sign of Inca heritage and indigenous liberation. Indeed, the process of canonizing Tupac Amaru relied on a discursive fiction: When Velasco Alvarado announced himself as the new leader of the country on June 4, 1969, he famously ended his speech, "Al hombre de la tierra ahora le podemos decir en la voz inmortal y liberatoria de Túpac Amaru: Campesino, el patrón ya no comerá más tu pobreza" (To the people of the land, we can now say in the liberatory and immortal voice of Tupac Amaru: The boss/landowner will no longer feed [from] your poverty). Tupac Amaru II never said those words. While Velasco Alvarado claimed that the quote had been orally passed down, it was eventually confirmed that its author was, in fact, Efraín Ruiz Caro, a Cusqueño journalist who worked with the regime as the leader of the Dirección de Difusión de La Reforma Agraria (Lituma-Aguero 2011). Nevertheless, the quote and the moment represented the inauguration of the new government. It cemented Tupac Amaru's place as rhetorical device of the leftist regime's revolution and father of the new nation. The revival of Tupac Amaru on the national stage was the product of a discursive fiction. And it is this discursive fiction that produced Tupac Amaru's masculinity as the sign of the modern revolutionary man.

The Velasco Alvarado regime's discursive invocation of Tupac Amaru's sign during processes of canonization did not suffice; they needed an official image to bring the sign to life and to reinforce the fictions that underwrote his reemergence on the national stage. However, they faced the problem of a missing original. Royalist troops had destroyed or painted over many portraits of Tupac Amaru from the eighteenth century, and none of the portraits Tupac Amaru commissioned in his lifetime is known to have survived. The regime initiated a visual campaign via the Dirección de Difusión de la Reforma Agraria and the Sistema Nacional de Apoyo a la Movilización Social. They contracted Ruiz Durand to create an image of Tupac Amaru that they could use as the logo of the campaign for the Agrarian Reform of 1969 (fig. 3). Ruiz Durand's image was not grounded in an actual historical

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Figure 3. "Logo of Tupac Amaru," *Revista participación* 2, no. 3 (August 1973). Source: Personal collection of Christabelle Roca-Rey.

source. He merely used Tupac Amaru's initials, "T. A.," as the basis for constructing a logo. His use of the sombrero was a common feature of the images of Tupac Amaru—an accoutrement that was quickly attached to the sign.[6] The logo rendered Tupac Amaru a nondescript, generic masculinity. This was crucial for his function as an ideal because the unremarkable, featureless nature of the logo made him—the ideal—relatable and adaptable. More important, the aesthetic of Tupac Amaru's image designed for mass production drew from the style of Pop Art of the United States that was increasingly popular in Peru at the time. Like the Pop Art movement of the 1960s and 1970s in the United States and Britain, which deployed serial repetition, "pop achorado"—unintentionally, perhaps—resurrected Tupac Amaru within the cult of celebrity, relying on practices of circulation and dissemination of an image to produce the male hero. The regime placed his image on local currency and in the Palacio de Gobierno, renamed sites in his honor, and commissioned several studies about him, including the massive tome *La Colección documental de la independencia del Perú* (Peru 1971). Vargas's engagement with both pop art and pop achorado emphasizes the centrality of repetition and technological reproduction to the invention of the icon and of the male hero. Not only must Tupac Amaru as national hero be invented, his invention relies on its constant reproduction, on the copy.

Ruiz Durand's image, however, was the subject of critique, and the regime quickly realized the production of the national male hero required an archetypal image to stabilize and bolster his meaning. Subsequently, Velasco Alvarado's regime decided to solve the problem of the missing original by holding a national

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competition to develop an archetypal image of Tupac Amaru. General de Brigada Alfredi Arrisueño Cornejo (1970) announced the competition in the newspaper *El Peruano* on September 10, 1970, claiming there was no "reliable" portrait of Tupac Amaru, and asserted that the competition was an attempt to pay homage to the hero. He declared: "Que no existe un retrato fidedigno de Túpac Amaru II y que su iconografía tradicional está aún sometida a discusión histórica, razón por la que es necesario convocar a un concurso de pintura cuya finalidad sea perpetuar su imagen plástica, exaltar su memoria y rendirle homenaje" (That there is no reliable portrait of Tupac Amaru and that his traditional iconography is still the subject of historical debate necessitate the convocation of a painting competition whose goal is to perpetuate his image, to exalt his memory, and to pay homage to him).

Even though it is true that none of the images of Tupac Amaru from his lifetime is known to have survived, the regime's appeal to historical debates surrounding his iconography was questionable.[7] Historians have long used the Spanish lieutenant Pablo de Astete's description of Condorcanqui that was published in Clements Robert Markham's 1862 text to determine Tupac Amaru's likeness. The regime's emphasis on the missing original merely served as pretext and justification for the creation of an archetypal image that would suit their needs.

Further, they relayed instructions asking participants in the national competition to produce "una representación cabal y digna del prócer" (a thorough and dignified representation of the hero) (Arrisueño Cornejo 1971). Participants struggled to produce a complete and dignified representation without a clear definition of those terms (Lituma-Aguero 2011). The criteria regarding the best archetypal image of the hero remained elusive. Some artists based their submissions on archival descriptions of Tupac Amaru or from the iconography found in children's books. But even so, their visual renditions of a dignified Tupac Amaru were themselves individual interpretations of discourse, subjective renditions of the noble hero that also relied on varying levels of individual imagination. The competition was quickly deemed unsuccessful. The judges claimed that none of the submissions managed "to embody [an] 'archetypical' image" of the hero (Arriseño Cornejo 1971). This was one of several competitions that followed to construct Tupac Amaru as an archetype: other national competitions sought to produce a statue of him in Cuzco but were also declared null and void; some competitions were successful but the winning submissions were mired in controversy. The proliferation of competitions, however, is instructive because it emphasizes that the making of the archetypal male hero and masculine ideal relies not just on acts of reconstruction and repetition but also on revision.

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More important, the national competition revealed that the masculine ideal is produced through acts of approximation and failure. The jury, for example, granted honorable mentions to four submissions by Ángel Chávez, Milner Cajahuaringa, Augusto Díaz Mori, and Fernando Saldías.[8] While there are general similarities in their individual compositions of Tupac Amaru, their images all offer vastly different interpretations of Condorcanqui as a noble rebel hero. Two of them portrayed Tupac Amaru as a refined Spaniard. In one submission, he appears as a *criollo* rebel with a long shirt and a vest, and in another he is a Spaniard who has a large sombrero and wears a cape. Of the four honorable mentions, the submission by the artist Milner Cajahuaringa gained the most attention, for it was the only one to portray Tupac Amaru in a decidedly indigenous aesthetic. In this portrait, Condorcanqui is sporting the traditional *uncu*—an indigenous shirt worn by Inca royalty. That the competition conferred the award of honorable mention upon these failed approximations is important because it conveys the logics of systems of normativity in that while one may ultimately fail to meet the ideal, one will be rewarded and recognized for how well one aspires to it. Failure inspires the quest to keep striving for the ideal.

Instead of creating an official image of the father of the revolution, the competitions that ensued put into circulation a new set of varying images of the hero. Dissatisfied with the images before him, Velasco Alvarado personally contracted a retired member of the police force, Néstor Quiroz, to paint an image based on the ones that appeared in the schoolbooks he used as a child. In 1972, Quiroz created an image of Tupac Amaru wearing a large sombrero that was used to inaugurate the room renamed Salón Túpac Amaru in the Palacio de Gobierno. It was later replaced by another image by Mario Salazar Eyzaguirre, which commemorated the 150th anniversary of the battle of Junín and Ayacucho. Each newly created image of Tupac Amaru during the competition offered different interpretations of Tupac Amaru and his racial identity. Tupac Amaru appeared as a man with European features but dressed in the indigenous *uncu*, or as a muscular mestizo, or as a dark-skinned Che Guevara. Thus the original to Vargas's queer copy is not only constructed but also composed of varying and contradictory renditions, failed approximations, and the accumulation of multiple stand-ins.

And failure is crucial to the production of the ideal. Even though the state discarded some of the renditions of Tupac Amaru produced in these competitions, those failed approximations came to function as stand-ins for Tupac Amaru well after the fall of the Velasco Alvarado regime. Fernando Saldías's image, for example, was commonly used for representations of Tupac Amaru in encyclopedias and journals in the 2000s (Lituma-Aguero 2011). Also, Cajahuaringa's rendition of

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Tupac Amaru became the logo of the revolutionary leftist guerilla group Movimiento Revolucionario Tupac Amaru (MRTA)—a group known for its extreme homophobia. Indeed, during Peru's dirty war (1980–2000), where the rhetoric of social cleansing and the war against terrorists extended to the indigenous populace and sexual dissidents, the MRTA transformed Tupac Amaru into the symbol of queer antagonism and a particular type of heteronormative masculinity. They reworked Cajahuaringa's rendition of Tupac Amaru's face for their logo. The group orchestrated the 1989 massacre of Tarapoto—or La Noche de Gardinias—the largest hate crime perpetuated against travestis in Peruvian history. The MRTA transformed Tupac Amaru into the symbolic enforcer of the heteronormative imperatives of a revolutionary social order seeking to cleanse the nation of queer and nonnormative bodies. As a national hero, Tupac Amaru represents a masculine ideal, and as a symbol of the revolutionary Left, he embodies a distinct hypermasculinity—a macho rebel hero who is decidedly heterosexual. Cajahuaringa's approximation of Tupac Amaru came to represent the Left's investment in a particular type of heteronormative citizenship. Vargas is not simply queering a masculine ideal, he is critically reworking and subverting the symbol of heteronormative nationalism and violent homophobia. Well after the fall of the Velasco Alvarado regime, a version of Cajahuaringa's failed approximation was wielded to produce heterosexuality as a national ideal.

But the invention of the masculine and national ideal not only depends on failed approximations, it also relies on fabricated and falsified images, for the production of the normative relies on fictions that pass as signs of the real. The two photographs in figures 4 and 5 exemplify the types of visual fictions and performances that brought Tupac Amaru's masculinity to life. In the image, a sketch of a gigantic Tupac Amaru by the artist Etna Velarde backgrounds Velasco Alvarado, who speaks at the podium. In figure 5, Tupac Amaru is shown with his bare chest, unruly hair, furrowed brows, large muscular arms, and clasped hands in the air. The dark hair and indigenous features bespeak the racial discourse enacted in the visual fiction consolidating Tupac Amaru's association with indigeneity. And his bare chest sexualizes him as a symbol of virility. Heterosexuality is always an unnamed presumed default, but the fact that Tupac Amaru was already known for his partnership with Micaela ensures that his virility is a sign of normative heterosexual masculinity. In figure 5, Tupac Amaru is seen with his iconic sombrero, long flowing hair, and muscular arms that portray a masculinity synonymous with brute force and strength. Indeed, while the phenotypical portrayals of Tupac Amaru in each photograph differ, both represent him as a great liberator, as he is seen breaking chains. They both rely on visual codes that imbued Tupac Amaru

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Figure 4. Velasco Alvarado and Tupac Amaru. Photo by Carlos Dominguez for *La Crónica* (October 3, 1974). Source: Personal collection of Christabelle Roca-Rey.

Figure 5. Velasco Alvarado. *La Crónica* (October 3, 1974). Source: Personal collection of Christabelle Roca-Rey.

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with characteristics of superhuman strength and exceptional masculine prowess. These visual fictions conjured Tupac Amaru as the liberator and paragon of masculine power, bravery, and strength.

These fabricated images also relied on theatrical staging, particularly through the spatial organization of the subjects in the photographs. For example, contrasted with a small Velasco Alvarado, Tupac Amaru is rendered larger-than-life. The difference in scale and size solidified Tupac Amaru's position as figure of overwhelming power, a sign of the all-powerful and the superhuman whose characteristics surpassed those of the individual man. This is crucial to the production of Tupac Amaru, and it illuminates that the ideal is constructed through referentiality and excess. Tupac Amaru must both act as referent for and exceed the characteristics of normative masculinity. It is the sign of excess than ensures the ideal is always unattainable and out of reach. His placement behind Velasco Alvarado, shown in military uniform with his arm poised in a military salute, also tethered Tupac Amaru to the revolution and consolidated his new status as the sign of the ultimate warrior, the ideal revolutionary soldier, and the hypermasculine. The strategic staging of Velasco Alvarado with the hero bolstered Tupac Amaru's position as a masculine ideal and aspirational figure of the revolution while also imbuing the revolution's leader with authority and power. Tupac Amaru propped up Velasco Alvarado's masculinity, and through visual association, Velasco Alvarado was concurrently produced as a liberator of the people. Both Tupac Amaru and Velasco Alvarado represent a normative masculinity of military strength, courage, and force.

Vargas's travesti Tupacs reveal that the hero's masculinity is produced as the *effect* of visual and discursive fictions, calculated acts of construction and reconstruction, failed approximations, theatrical staging, the accumulation and proliferation of multiple stand-ins across a set of representational machines. If acts of travestismo expose the constructedness of gender, Vargas's falsified Tupacs index hegemony's original to be a construction anyway. Far from a neutral objective enterprise, the production of the hero of the nation and of a gender ideal depends on the accumulation of symbolic capital across visual technologies and regimes of representation.

In drawing attention to the role of the image in the invention of Tupac Amaru, the quintessential male hero, Vargas points to the theatricality of gender normativity and heteronormative nationalism and exposes the fictions that produce the normal. The image proved vital for the reinvention of Tupac Amaru as a masculine ideal. For the image is the theatre where fictions and fantasies of gender are made real, crystalized, and naturalized and where the orchestrated production of normativity remains hidden from view. Travestismo underscores the role of a set of

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performative strategies, fictions, and repetition to the production of a gender ideal and of national identity. Vargas's act of travestismo intervenes in Tupac Amaru's symbolic production to contest normative constructions of gender that underwrite the production of an exclusionary nationalism. In the section that follows, I assess the political implications of Vargas's falsification of Tupac Amaru by attending to the ways he wields travestismo as a weapon of refusal, of resistance, and of reimagination.

The Scandal of the Falsified Tupac Amaru: Travestismo as Exposure

Vargas's queering of Tupac Amaru has been the subject of controversy because it uses the very mechanisms and visual idioms deployed to hegemony to challenge Tupac Amaru's symbolic and mythological meaning. The artist specifically targeted pedagogical devices of nationalism in his exhibition, coopting iconography, aesthetic practices, and visual technologies. For example, he based his four falsified Tupacs on a portrait from a *lámina escolar* similar to the one shown in figure 1. In Peru, children often first encounter the national heroes through these illustrations in schoolbooks that teach the individual story and the visual codes designated for each hero. Portraiture confers honor and status upon Tupac Amaru, teaching children to view him as a person of stature and as a model of the ideal citizen. As a genre, portraiture "evokes or revokes subjectivity by producing the visual fiction of an individualized and autonomous self" (Lugo-Ortiz and Rosenthal 2016: 4). It is a device that produces the fiction of an ideal masculine subject. As pedagogical devices, the láminas escolares are instruments of nationalist interpellation that train and induct children into particular imaginations of national identity and citizenship. And since Tupac Amaru is a stand-in for aspirational masculinity, children learn a set of gendered expectations and norms that are embedded within these imaginations of citizenship.

Vargas appropriates and subverts the legitimizing technologies of the state. He destabilizes the fictions of the ideal hero and passes his four "false women" as real. To enact his travestismo upon the hero, he altered the portrait by digitally adding makeup to Tupac Amaru's face and engaged in a form of reverse hero worship. In our conversations, Vargas stated, "Yo quería mariconizar a Tupac" (I wanted to fag Tupac) (pers. comm., 2019). He knocked Tupac Amaru off the pedestal of hypermasculinity by transforming him into the antitheses: a travesti—a discarded, overlooked, subordinate masculinity—or a cisgender woman, the symbol of passivity and weakness. But the political implications of the artist's reverse hero worship extend beyond the politics of recognition and inclusion; the subver-

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sion of hegemony's tool exposes the fictions that have produced Tupac Amaru's masculinity.

Vargas's use of *falsification* in the piece's title stages a gender built on falsity, artifice, repetition, and reconstruction. Each Tupac is a falsified copy of the hero, and just as no two gendered performances are exactly alike, no two Tupacs are exactly alike. The use of the four different women icons cloaked in the idiom of pop achorado in the series indexes the production of gender through repetition with a difference. The critical disassemblage and reassemblage of Tupac Amaru's sign in order to transform him into feminine icons shatters the presumed stability and naturalness of the gender binary and signals the mutability of gender categories. It exposes the reliance of gender binaries on a set of arbitrary visual codes. Marilyn Monroe, Farrah Faucett, Frida Kahlo, and Dina Páucar each represent different racial and gendered ideals of womanhood, peak femininity, and sexual desirability and reference distinct iconographic repertoires and circuits of commercialization that belong to the cult of celebrity. I do not read them as merely representing distinct typologies of womanhood; rather, I see them as mimicking the proliferation of multiple stand-ins that have been constitutive to the production of the original. Furthermore, since hegemony's original(s) is a construction that relies on fiction and individual imagination, the exhibition's display of varying and diverse renditions of Tupac Amaru is an instantiation of a set of competing visual fictions that contest and destabilize Tupac Amaru's masculinity. Since travestismo facilitates an encounter with the unexpected to reveal what is possible, the proliferation of falsified Tupacs at the exhibition is the assertion that diverse imaginations of Tupac Amaru—and by extension, the nation—are possible. To dare to reimagine is central to the deployment of travestismo as a tool and site of sexual dissidence.

Indeed, queering Tupac forms part of the artist's larger deployment of travestismo as an act of political and sexual dissidence. Vargas's interrogation of idioms of normativity and his critique of the Left and of patriotism are crucial for understanding why the exhibition elicited such intense backlash. A section of the exhibition featured the piece "La Sagrada Familia," in which Tupac Amaru appeared as the Virgin Mary flanked by feminized versions of two major Marxist figures in Peru: the thinker José Carlos Mariátegui and General Juan Velasco Alvarado. In queering Velasco Alvarado, Mariátegui, and Tupac Amaru as sacred cows of the Left, Vargas critiqued the masculinism of the Left, of the nation, and of Catholic discourse. To portray Tupac Amaru as the Virgin Mary is to enact a double queering that points to the role of religious discourse in justifying the state regulation of gender and sexuality and the disciplining of nonnormative bodies. The use of the Catholic idiom also critiqued the production of the sacred as

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a tool of social disciplining and submission, for the creation and designation of individuals or objects as sacred, venerated symbols of a political movement or of a nation—symbols that require our reverence and respect—work to manufacture our consent and to ensure our obedience to the politics of normativity. Queering Velasco Alvarado and Tupac Amaru as venerated figures of hypermasculinity highlighted the normative ideals and expectations of the revolutionary Left. Travestismo thrives in the politics of irreverence. It is a mode of resistance that refuses allegiance to the nation state, to political structures and religious dogma. In targeting the idioms of normativity and refusing the lure of political integration, travestismo calls for the abolition of official systems of classification and any leftist allegiance to institutional power. For abolition is the gateway to the possible.

Vargas also uses travestismo to critically contest official discourses of patriotism. The video installation in the gallery titled "Por amor a la patria" (For love of country), for example, was the most controversial piece in the exhibition, for it portrayed Tupac Amaru II and the hero José San Martín as *travestis* engaged in various sexual acts with other men, including simulated masturbation, touching, and kissing (mentechucarrera 2009). Outrage ensued among members of the general public, and the Alianza Francesa censored the exhibition, demanding that Vargas remove the installation. Facing backlash from various groups of artists over censorship, the gallery ultimately relented and instead of removing the installation set an age requirement for entry to the exhibition. The spectacle of homoeroticism was threatening for the following reasons. First, the video defied the heteronormative rules and codes of conduct that preside over public space. Such rules prohibit overt displays of homoeroticism, especially among men relegating expressions of queer desire to the realm of the private. The censorship of the exhibition was a response to a queer takeover of public space that had been enacted in the exhibition. Second, portraying Tupac Amaru as a travesti contested heterosexuality's standing as the presumed default of the male hero. Since homosexuality is the sign of a subordinate, feminized masculinity, Tupac Amaru's sexual intimacy with other men in Miraflores's video was the ultimate undoing of his manhood—the transformation of his sign into that of a compromised masculinity. The title "For love of country" underscored the gender and sexual politics of an exclusionary nationalism insofar as heterosexuality remains a prerequisite for the ideal citizen-subject, casting sexual dissidents as traitors of the nation. Travestismo enacted the call for collective betrayal. Tupac Amaru was co-opted as a diva, a travesti—traitor or social deviant of the nation, a weapon in a gesture of queer refusal and a call for a critical reimagination of the national.

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Travestismo and the Reimagination of Andean Cosmology

Finally, travestismo is also a methodology for articulating a countermythology and a false history, for reimagining the colonial past. An avid reader of queer theory and Andean cosmology, Vargas explicitly envisioned the falsified women as an engagement with the queer antagonism of the present and with the suppression of indigenous imaginations of gender and sexuality during the colonial period (pers. comm., 2013). That the feminized version of Tupac Amaru's face is superimposed over Guaman Poma's drawing of the execution of the last Inca king, Tupac Amaru I, and the word INVISIBLE is written in reverse emphasizes that travestismo is a site of hidden epistemologies. Vargas uses fabrication, fictionalization, and falsification to offer a queer reimagination of the indigenous past. He incorporated selective readings of scholarly works and colonial archives to stage a queer performance of the Andean cosmovision in the lithograph (pers. comm., 2013). In his research, Vargas found that prior to the arrival of the Spanish, indigenous societies were organized according to the precept of complementary dualism, which had a quadripartite organization comprising two masculine elements and two feminine elements and made space for masculine women and feminine men (Rostworowski 2007; Webb 2012). The artist relied heavily on the work of noted scholar Michael Horswell (2005), who posits that prior to the arrival of the Spanish in 1542, the Inca Empire and its Moche predecessors had a designated place for third-gender subjectivity. They organized society around the notion of complementary dualism, which designated spaces for masculine and feminine ambiguity.

Andean gods had replicas, or doubles, and the quadripartition of complementary dualism organized societies and the world along a double command: *el mundo de arriba* (the world above) and *el mundo de abajo* (the world below). In her analysis of Andean gods, María Rostworowski de Diez Canseco (2007: 23) affirms: "Esta cuatripartición se transformará en una oposición de hombres masculinos, mujeres masculinas, hombres femeninos y mujeres femeninas" (The quadripartition would transform into an opposition of masculine men, masculine women, feminine men and feminine women). The masculine elements, known as *hanan*, and the feminine elements, known as *hurin*, mirrored each other, to create a corporeal symmetry or a system of complementary dualism referred to as *yanantin*. Anthropologist Hillary S. Webb (2012: 2; emphasis in original) explains, "Andean philosophy views the opposites of existence (such as male/female, dark/light, inner/outer) as *inter*dependent and essential parts of a harmonious whole." Horswell (2005) claims the Spanish violently suppressed indigenous cultural practices, targeting the third-gender shamans who operated as mediators of Andean ritual practice.

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My intention is neither to romanticize the indigenous past as a site of queer utopia nor to offer a wholesale dismissal of these scholarly works on Andean cosmology. While it is true that the Incas used the quadripartition to divide its empire into four, calling it the Tawantinsuyu, my goal is not to use Vargas's work to establish a historical truth about gender and sexuality in precolonial society; rather, I treat his articulation of indigenous philosophy as a gesture of reimagination, the presentation of a counterhistory grounded in decolonial fabulation. The travesti exhibition is a modern fabrication of the colonial past that employs lithographs, images of Tupac Amaru I's execution, and selective readings of scholarly works on indigenous philosophy and of colonial archives as performance strategies that ultimately stage a queer rendition of the philosophy of complementary dualism.

Indeed, Vargas organized the lithograph to stage the precept of complementary dualism. That there are four Tupacs, for example, is a gesture to the Andean quadripartite system. And to render Tupac Amaru the hero through a female pop counter-copy is to replicate the notion of complementary dualism and doubling so central to Andean philosophy. For not only do we read Tupac Amaru through a feminine counterpart, we also simultaneously read each female pop icon through the masculine indigenous hero. Tupac Amaru is shown as Marilyn or Frida or Dina or Farrah, and each of these female icons is also queered and rendered as Tupac Amaru. This double-queering facilitates the piece's merging and reordering of the signs of masculinity and femininity and ultimately performs the gender doubling of the quadripartite system. Complementary dualism is recast and updated through the tropes of modern-day icons and through the logics of mechanical reproduction. This queering of the philosophy of complementary dualism invites the viewer to read the suppression of travestismo through the repression of indigeneity and, concurrently, to read the suppression of indigeneity during the colonial era through a queer lens. This folding of indigeneity into travestismo and vice versa indexes the intersectionality of systems of oppression. It marks marginal subjectivities that operate outside of or in antagonistic relations to normative paradigms of the nation-state. Far from a frivolous collapsing of travestismo with indigeneity, that the piece conjoins this queer, falsified Tupac Amaru to the domination of indigenous people and practices is important because Vargas delineates a shared genealogy between the queer body—the social outcast—and the indigenous subject. In the exhibition, travestismo seeks to upend regimes of normativity that organize sexuality, gender, race, and ethnicity.

Moreover, the superimposition of the face of the queer Tupacs over the execution scene of Tupac Amaru I offers a queer retelling of the past. The execution of Tupac Amaru I in 1572 and the fall of Vilcabamba marked the consolidation of

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Spanish power over the Inca empire (Hemming 1970). In the lithograph, the execution marks the ending of Inca rule, the suppression of indigenous cultural practice, and according to the artist, the repression of gender ambiguity and queerness. It reimagines this execution as a moment in queer history. The word *invisible* that appears in reverse in the lithograph refers to the suppression of indigeneity and the erasure of queer subjects from the annals of colonial history. Travestismo is a site of hidden epistemologies, subjugated knowledges that persist despite past and present systemic violence enacted upon bodies. The lithograph offers a travesti retelling of indigenous history, a reimagination of the indigenous past to mark a queer presence that has been erased or made invisible in official history. *Falsifying Tupac* is not just a tool of exposure, it also entails the redeployment of the icon to reimagine history in ways that make space for those who have been written out of official history.

The lithograph also proposes an alternative relationship to the past through the use of historical layering. It marks the convergence of multiple temporal periods and events rejecting the linear nature of heteronormative time. It references the execution of Tupac Amaru I, which marked the consolidation of the Spanish conquest of Peru in 1534, the Andean insurrection of 1780 led by Tupac Amaru II, and the reemergence of Tupac Amaru as father of the 1969 revolution in Peru. Each lithograph offers a palimpsest of historical periods. This is a queering of time in that the images enable the coexistence of multiple temporal moments. It situates the superimposition of a queer Tupac Amaru in relation to legacies of conquest, indigenous rebellion, violent revolution, and the aesthetic practices of pop culture. The deployment of travestismo in the piece both troubles the heteronormativity of time and queers indigenous history. In summary, Vargas uses travestismo to reimagine complementary dualism, to propose different modes of relating to the past, and ultimately to make space for queer bodies that have been written out of national history.

In this essay, I have explored the queering of Tupac Amaru to underscore the way travestismo functions as a mode of exposure, refusal, and reimagination. Vargas wields travestismo to critically deconstruct the production of national and gender ideals and to expose the fictions that produce normativity. Travestismo is a weapon of refusal, an idiom of dissent that facilitates an encounter with the possible. In Vargas's work, Tupac Amaru appears as a modern-day travesti who disrupts the heteronormativity of art galleries and public spaces, who rejects clear distinctions between past and present, and who blurs and reconfigures boundaries of gender to pay homage to queer outcasts, to propose new modes of imagining and navigating the world. The queering of Tupac Amaru is a gesture of potentiality that

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not only makes space for queer denizens within the national imaginary but also insists that other imaginations of the world are possible.

Notes

1. Unless stated otherwise, all translations are mine.
2. In this essay, I deploy the Spanish terms *travesti* and *travestismo* instead of their English cognates "transvestite," "transvestism," or "transgender" to ground my analysis in local experiences and traditions of sexual dissidence in Peru. As theorist Giancarlo Cornejo (2019: 457) notes, *travestismo* is a Latin American vernacular for a specific positionality that does not fit neatly within US-based queer and trans studies. Whereas the term *transgender* has a marked indifference to the direction of gender migration, *travestismo* is unidirectional in that it "takes femininity, in its broadest sense, as its final destination" (457). At times, *travesti* functions as an epithet in Peru. It also typically describes working-class subjects whose class position disallows them from always presenting as feminine and limits their access to the health services needed to enact the bodily transformation they desire (Machuca Rose 2019: 242). Due to the pejorative connotations of the word and its illegibility to global funders, "travesti" is an outlier of mainstream queer organizing in Peru (Machuca Rose 242). *Travesti* also lives alongside other urban Peruvian vernacular terms for queerness, such as *loca*, *cabra*, *bebita*, that are not directly translatable to English. Thus, I keep the local term to make room in queer studies for sites of opacity, subjects, and grammars of sexual dissidence that are not fully intelligible or assimilable to the linguistic and theoretical hegemony of the North.

   I employ the English word *queer*, however, to stay true to its meaning as a term of shifting and open signification. The term *queer* has been used in Latin American queer studies and other parts of the global South to challenge the hegemony of local heteronormative nationalisms, to attend to autochthonous forms of sexual dissidence, and to destabilize the presumed universality of a white Eurocentric queer theory emanating from the global North (Gomes Pereira 2019; Gómez-Barris 2017; Ochoa 2014). I harness the capaciousness of the term *queer* to bring these falsified Tupacs into a field of knowledge and to examine nonnormative subjectivities and forms of gender and racial embodiment in the Andes.
3. For a summary of previous and recent examples of censorship of Vargas's work see Vargas 2021 and Villalba 2021. For an overview of Vargas's work, see the artist's blog: javivargas.blogspot.com/.
4. I am unable to reproduce the original lámina upon which Vargas based his series due to the very poor resolution quality of the image. While his archive has multiple láminas, he based the four women primarily on lámina "Túpac Amaru II" #154 by Editorial Huascarán (2001).

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5. Kurakas acted as intermediary figures between Spanish authorities and indigenous communities and collected the head tax or tributes.
6. Jesus Ruiz Durand's logo appears in the following newspaper articles: Romualdo Valle 1972 and Acha 1971.
7. Scholars claim to have found surviving images of Tupac Amaru, but these are largely speculative. Pablo Macera's copy of "La Victoria de Sangarara," in *Retrato de Tupac Amaru* (1975) is one such example, but that copy differs substantially from archival descriptions of Tupac Amaru. There is also speculation about images appearing in Tupac Amaru's likeness under paintings of the Virgen del Carmen (See Gisbert 1980; de Mesa and Gisbert 1982).
8. See images of the four honorable mentions here: "En busca de la imagen Arquetípica de Túpac," *La Corónica*, March 21, 1971, Documents of Latin America and Latino Art, International Center for the Arts of the Americas at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, icaa.mfah.org/s/en/item/865702#?c=&m=&s=&cv=&xywh=-685%2C-21%2C6551%2C3666.

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